



City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection

Public Vehicles Division · 2350 W. Ogden · Chicago, IL 60608 · 312-746-4200

BACKGROUNDER: SECURITY CAMERAS

Security cameras are an effective deterrent to crime against drivers if, and only if, would-be criminals are aware of its presence. By having the camera in plain site (usually it is mounted near the rear view mirror) and by posting notice in the passenger area, crime will be averted.

The Rules and Regulations for Taxicab Medallion Holders specifically require that for any vehicle with a security camera, decals must be posted on the passenger side and driver side rear windows stating "This vehicle is equipped with a security camera."

Any tampering with the camera or the equipment it is connected to will severely compromise its effectiveness and is in violation. During the vehicle's regularly scheduled inspections, camera equipment will be checked, as will the functions that trigger it. At a minimum, all approved cameras must be programmed to record pictures when a door is opened and when the emergency button is pushed.

Since the camera is regularly taking pictures, even if it is not always recording them, it can capture and store images that occur *before* the triggering event, such as when a door is opened or the emergency button is pushed. These pre-event images can be very valuable in crime solving, particularly in the latter case.

All drivers should make themselves familiar with the camera system should the cab they lease have such a safety feature. First, the driver should confirm that the system is functioning. To do this, all the driver has to do is make sure that the status light is blinking green after they have entered the cab (and thus triggered the camera by opening a door).

If there is no light or the light is red, then there is a problem with the camera and service is required. The driver should not leave the garage with that cab! On the other hand, if the light is blinking green and all appears as it should, then, the driver should make sure he or she knows the exact location of the emergency button. Triggering this button in an emergency is very important because it tells the system to store 2.5 minutes worth of images prior to the trigger and 2.5 minutes after the trigger in an overwrite-protected format. Images are recorded at a rate of at least one image per second. This sort of information will be invaluable in catching and prosecuting criminals.

After a crime occurs, it is absolutely critical that an investigator be able to view and copy the images as soon as possible. It is crucial that the following steps be taken:

- Call the police or go to a police station to file a report.
- Call or come in person to the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Public Vehicle Division, 312-746-4300, 2350 West Ogden. Have ready the police report number and the police district where it was reported, as well as the time, date, and location of the incident.
- Call the department **within 48 hours of the occurrence** to have a department investigator schedule a time to view and copy the images.

The department investigator will work with the Police Department to provide any and all evidence gathered from the security camera. Again, this sort of information will be invaluable in catching and prosecuting criminals.